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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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FOUR STATE PARK BEACHES POST SWIMMING ADVISORIES; BEED'S LAKE AND UNION GROVE REMOVE ADVISORIES

DES MOINES — Swimming advisories remain at four state park beaches this week.

“Swimming is not recommended” signs will remain posted at Big Creek in Polk County, Lake Darling in Washington County and Rock Creek in Jasper County. Bacteria counts at these beaches all exceeded 235, the one-time maximum standard for *E. coli* bacteria.

A swimming advisory will also remain at Backbone in Delaware County, as bacteria levels there exceeded the geometric mean standard of 126. The geometric mean is a type of average, using five samples taken over 30 days, and is calculated using a formula from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

“Even if Backbone has low bacteria levels for the next two weeks, it would still have a high geometric mean because the first three samples were so high,” said Janice Boekhoff, a research geologist with the DNR.

Because of the high geometric mean, the swimming advisory will remain posted at Backbone for at least two more weeks.

Swimming advisories were removed this week from beaches at Beed's Lake in Franklin County and Union Grove in Tama County.

Swimming advisories do not mean that beaches are closed, only that swimming is not recommended. Park visitors can still take part in other beach activities like sunbathing and volleyball.

Bacteria levels at Iowa's 31 other state parks were within acceptable levels.

Weekly beach monitoring results, along with an informational guide on understanding monitoring results, are available at www.iowadnr.com/news/beach.html.

For more information, contact Janice Boekhoff at (319) 931-6050 or Jessie Rolph at (515) 281-5131.

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DNR TO KICK-OFF BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS AT FORMER TRACTOR FACTORY IN CHARLES CITY

White Farm Equipment site backdrop for announcement and agreement with U.S. EPA

CHARLES CITY — The DNR will announce new statewide initiatives for brownfield redevelopment June 17 at 10:30 a.m. on the site of the former White Farm Equipment agricultural tractor factory, located at North Grand Ave. and Main St. in Charles City. A display of historic tractors manufactured at the site will also be included. The public is invited to attend.

The 70-acre site produced tractors for more than 90 years under the names of Hart-Parr, Oliver and White. However, the property has sat vacant for the last 10 years, with bankruptcy of the current site owner and perceived contamination issues hindering the sale and redevelopment of this property located in the heart of Charles City. Brownfields are defined as abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial properties, where resale or redevelopment has been hindered by known or suspected environmental contamination at the site.

Through the new Iowa Brownfield Redevelopment Program, DNR environmental staff will investigate the site to determine what contamination, if any, may exist and how the site can best be remediated with the ultimate goal of site redevelopment, job creation and improvement to the environment and quality of the local community. The public announcement will be the beginning of the DNR's investigation efforts at the site.

"This site has been important to Charles City's past, and it remains important to the city's future," said Mel Pins, coordinator of the DNR's brownfield efforts. "Through this new program, we seek to answer environmental questions at brownfield sites, while encouraging the redevelopment and reuse of these properties to their maximum potential."

At this event, the DNR will also announce an important Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) that will assist in the redevelopment of brownfield sites. In conjunction with changes made in Iowa law, the MOA will provide environmental liability protection to site owners or potential buyers that enroll in the DNR's Land Recycling Program, providing an attractive incentive for potential enrollees and site developers.

"We're pleased to see the state of Iowa working closely with communities on brownfield issues said Jim Erb, mayor of Charles City. "This program will be an important tool for community revitalization across Iowa."

Officials from Charles City and Floyd County will provide comments in support of this new program, and state legislators and Iowa's Federal Congressional delegation have been invited to attend. DNR staff will demonstrate its soil and water sampling equipment, including truck-mounted probes that can reach to depths of more than 100 feet.

The Iowa Brownfield Redevelopment program is a cooperative effort of the DNR and the Iowa Department of Economic Development. The program is funded by the U.S. EPA.

For more information, contact Mel Pins at (515) 577-2341 or Bob Drustrup at (515) 281-8900.

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DNR CONTINUES PROCESS IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

Landfill Permitting Process Revamped

DES MOINES — The DNR conducted an intensive review, the week of June 1-4, of its landfill permitting process to increase efficiency and reduce down time. The DNR hopes to decrease the time it takes to process a landfill permit by nearly 85 percent.

"Improving the efficiency of our processes has allowed us to keep a strong commitment to the environment, which is our top priority," said DNR Director Jeff Vonk. "We are demonstrating that business principles are an effective means for improving state government."

Landfill permits are issued to municipal landfills by the Iowa DNR, and renewals are currently issued every three years. The complexity of the landfill permitting process made it an excellent candidate for process improvement. The effort is part of an overall emphasis by Iowa state government to reinvent how it conducts business to save money and time while improving customer service.

Through the process improvement event, the DNR hopes to reduce the time from facility plan submittal to approval from 187.5 days to 30 days. The process improvement effort also reduced the number of review steps by nearly 75 percent – from 52 steps to 15 steps.

The DNR's Air Quality Bureau and Water Quality Bureau held similar events in the last year to streamline the air permitting process and State Revolving Fund wastewater permitting process, respectively. With a goal of decreasing permitting time by 25 percent, the air permitting team actually decreased it by more than 87 percent – from 62 days to 7.91. The SRF wastewater permitting team decreased its permitting time by nearly 85 percent.

One of the reasons for the business process improvement events' success is the involvement of customers in the process.

“By streamlining the landfill process, we will be able to get permits through the system a lot quicker,” said Kelly Rinehart, owner, of North Dallas Landfill. “It was important to have customers involved because it helped the team establish guidelines to address the customer's needs.”

The DNR received assistance from Pella Corporation in leading the event. The process improvement techniques used by the DNR are often applied by successful business and industries to dramatically increase efficiency. Pella Corporation undertakes multiple process improvement events each week.

As part of its commitment to improved efficiency, the DNR will revamp its underground storage tank process in July.

For more information, contact Jane Mild (515) 281-5105 or by e-mail at Jane.Mild@dnr.state.ia.us

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ENGINEERING FORM FOR NEW AND EXPANDING ANIMAL CONFINEMENTS

DES MOINES – The DNR offers a new form for producers planning to build or expand a confinement operation using a concrete or steel manure storage structure.

“The new form is designed to assist producers who voluntarily use an engineer,” said Bob Palla, a DNR engineer. “It replaces the construction design statement, which is used with non-engineered designs, and simplifies the filing process,” he added.

An engineered design is optional when the confinement will have more than 500 animal units but will be under the engineering threshold. “An engineer is required for operations that pass a threshold size that varies between 1,250 animal units for a farrowing/gestation operation to 4,000 animal units for a cattle or dairy operation,” Palla said.

The design certification form should be submitted to the DNR with the manure management plan, just as a construction design statement is submitted.

Palla added that a construction design statement must be filed with the DNR to certify that all concrete and construction standards will be observed, if the operation will be larger than 500 animal units and the producer does not use an engineer.

Both the new form and the construction design statement are available on the DNR Web site under animal feeding operations at www.iowadnr.com.

A professional engineer is required to construct, modify or increase the animal loading on an earthen basin or lagoon, regardless of the size of the confinement operation.

This form is not required for producers who are building or modifying a confinement operation with 500 or less animal units.

For more information, contact a DNR engineer at 515-281-8941 or the nearest DNR field office.

For more information, contact Bob Palla at 515-281-8868.

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MIDWEST RADIOACTIVE WASTE COMMISSION MEETING ON TUESDAY

DES MOINES – The Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact Commission will hold its annual meeting by telephone conference call from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 15.

The meeting will be held in Conference Room 4E of the Wallace State Office Building, located at 502 E. 9th Street in Des Moines. The public is welcome to attend.

Iowa DNR Deputy Director Liz Christiansen is a commissioner for the organization. Other states represented include Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin.

The meeting agenda includes a report on funding for the Low-Level Forum and other national events, a financial report for fiscal year 2004, action on the fiscal year 2005 budget and election of officers.

For more information, contact Liz Christiansen at (515) 281-3388 or by e-mail at Liz.Christiansen@dnr.state.ia.us.